

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

In the Claims:

1-22 (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method of improving the stability of lemon/lime flavor of a lemon/lime flavored beverage, while also maintaining or increasing the tartness of the lemon/lime beverage, comprising the steps of:

- (a) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage an acidulant system consisting of (i) citric acid and (ii) adipic acid having a smaller dissociation constant than citric acid; and
- (b) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage a buffer salt system consisting of a citrate salt and a phosphate salt,

wherein the ratio by weight of said adipic acid : said citric acid is 1 : 15 to 1 : 3.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of improving the stability of lemon/lime flavor of a lemon/lime flavored beverage, while also maintaining or increasing the tartness of the lemon/lime beverage, comprising the steps of:

- (a) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage an acidulant system consisting of (i) a combination of phosphoric acid and citric acid and (ii) adipic acid having a smaller dissociation constant than both phosphoric acid and citric acid; and
- (b) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage a buffer salt system consisting of a citrate salt and a phosphate salt,

wherein the ratio by weight of said adipic acid : said phosphoric acid : said citric acid is 3.0-4.0 : 1.4-2.0 : 1.0.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the ratio by weight of the adipic acid : citric acid is 1 : 10 to 1 : 4.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the ratio by weight of the adipic acid : phosphoric acid: citric acid is 3.3-3.7 : 1.6-1.8 : 1.0.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 and or claim 24, wherein the citric acid is present in an amount from about 0.18-0.24% based on finished lemon/lime flavored beverage weight.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the citric acid is present in an amount from about 0.19-0.23% based on finished lemon/lime flavored beverage weight.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 and or claim 24, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are independently selected from the group consisting of sodium, potassium and calcium salts.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 and or claim 24, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are independently selected from the group consisting of mono-, di- and tri-ionic salts.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 and or claim 24, wherein the ratio by weight of citrate salt : phosphate salt is from 1 : 2 to 2 : 1.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the ratio by weight of citrate salt : phosphate salt is 1 : 1.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.04-0.18% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.05-0.15% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.25-0.41% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.3-0.36% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage:

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the lemon/lime flavored beverage is a lemon/lime flavored carbonated soft drink.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the lemon/lime flavored beverage is a lemon/lime flavored cola beverage.

39. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the lemon/lime flavored beverage is a lemon/lime flavored cola beverage.

40. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the lemon/lime flavored beverage is a lemon/lime flavored carbonated soft drink.